

## OSEP Monitoring Report - New Jersey

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The attached Report contains the results of the first two steps (Validation Planning and Validation Data Collection) in the Office of Special Education Program's (OSEP) Continuous Improvement Monitoring of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Parts C and B, in the State of New Jersey during the weeks of February 14, 2000 and September 25, 2000. The process is designed to focus resources on improving results for infants, toddlers, children and youth with disabilities and their families through enhanced partnerships between the State agencies, OSEP, parents and advocates. The Validation Planning phase of the monitoring process included the completion of Self-Assessments by Part C and Part B, a series of public input meetings with guided discussions around core areas of IDEA, and the organization of two Steering Committees, one for Part C and another for Part B, that provided further comments on the status of implementation of IDEA. As part of the public input process, OSEP and the State made particular efforts to hold the public input meetings at locations and times when all stakeholders could attend. The Validation Data Collection phase included interviews with parents, students, agency administrators, local program and school administrators, service providers, teachers and service coordinators and reviews of children's records. Information obtained from these data sources was shared in one meeting conducted with the New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services (DHSS) (Part C), and the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDE) (Part B), representatives from the two Steering Committees, Part C regional staff, local superintendents, and advocates.

The report contains a detailed description of the process utilized to determine strengths, areas of noncompliance with IDEA, and suggestions for improved results in each of the core IDEA areas.

### Early Intervention Services for Infants and Toddlers with Disabilities: Part C of IDEA

#### **Strengths**

OSEP observed the following strengths:

- Leadership of DHSS
- Regional Early Intervention Collaboratives
- Comprehensive System of Personnel Development
- Natural Environments Systems Change
- Special Child Health Services Registry
- Newborn Hearing Screening
- Autism Registry and Research
- Coordination of Child Find with Social Security Administration
- DHSS supports Family Initiatives

- Parents as Key Regional Staff
- Reporting Data to Promote Accountability
- Collaboration Between DHSS and NJDSE on Transition

#### **Areas of Noncompliance**

OSEP observed the following areas of noncompliance:

- Effective Oversight and Monitoring Not Implemented to Ensure Noncompliance is Identified and Corrective Actions Are Made
- Inadequate Documentation of Dissemination Practices
- Child Find Activities Not Coordinated
- Failure to Implement Service Coordination Responsibilities
- All Needed IFSP Services Are Not Identified and Provided
- Inadequate Identification of Family Supports and Services in IFSPs
- Steps in Transition Planning Not Included in IFSPs
- Transition of Children with Disabilities from Part C to Part B Is Ineffective

### **Education of Children and Youth with Disabilities:** **Part B of IDEA**

#### **Strengths**

OSEP observed the following strengths:

- NJSDE's Core Curriculum Content Standards (CCCS)
- Participation of Students with Disabilities in Statewide Assessments
- Collaboration with the Statewide Parent Advocacy Network (SPAN) for Early Childhood Program Expectations - Standards of Quality
- Capacity Building Grants
- Comprehensive System of Personnel Development
- Whole School Reform
- Statewide Training/Technical Assistance Initiatives and Promising Local Practices
- Statewide Training/Technical Assistance Initiative to Enhance Local School District Practices in Meeting Secondary Transition Requirements
- Initiatives to Promote Meaningful Parent Involvement

#### **Areas of Noncompliance**

OSEP observed the following areas of noncompliance:

- State monitoring system is effective in identifying systemic noncompliance, but OSEP was unable at the time of the visit (September 2000) to determine the effectiveness of corrections ordered by NJSDE.<sup>1</sup>
- Complaint Procedures Inadequate.<sup>2</sup>
- Lack of Alternate Statewide Assessments
- Removal – Lack of Placement in the Least Restrictive Environment, (a) Segregated Placement – Students with Behavioral Issues and (b) Impact of Administrative Practices on Placement
- Lack of Psychological Counseling Services as a Related Service
- Failure to Consider Extended School Year Services on an Individual Basis
- Denial of Related Services and Delays in Evaluations Due to Insufficient Supply of Personnel

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<sup>1</sup> OSEP conducted a follow-up visit June 2001 and determined that NJSDE's new monitoring and enforcement system was effective in correcting noncompliance in local education agencies.

<sup>2</sup> NJSDE submitted revised complaint procedures, which are currently under review by OSEP.